However, the loss during April—Dec. 01 is higher with reference to the corresponding period last year by about 85% due to following reasons:

(0 Stagnation in steel consumption due to slow down in the economy.

(ii) Over supply situation in the domestic market

(iii) Fall in international prices due to global recession and increase in antidumping cases in USA, Canada, European Union etc. has also adversely affected sales realisation in the domestic as well as international market.

(iv) Targets of divestment of non-crore assets have not been achieved because of opposition by political parties and trade unions or in some cases, a lack of response to the offer for disinvestments leading to non relisation of desired results as envisaged.

(c) SAIL has taken the following measures to improve the conditions of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP):

- As a result of intensive cost control drive launched by SAIL in the year 1997, RSP has been able to contain variable cost at a lower level than as compared to 1996-97 after absorbing input cost escalations.
- Implementation of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for employees based on deferred payment basis in 1998 and 1999 resulted in separation of 3820 employees. In February 2001, SAIL introduced VR Scheme based on DPE pattern and thereby 12S1 employees opted for VRS in RSP. Another VR Scheme has been launched on similar pattern in January 02.
- Market oriented production and product-mix, increasing sales net work, more focus on customer satisfaction, etc.
- Government has also divested, during 2000-01, Captive Power Plants-II of RSP, identified for divestment under Business Restructuring package.

National Steel Institute, Pari

305. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether a National Steel Institute has been set up and inaugurated at Puri in Orissa, to help the Steel Industry to face international competition, by carrying out training and research;

(b) if so, what are the main challenges faced by the Indian Steel Industry; and

(c) what courses of study and research have been introduced at the Institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) and (b) The domestic steel industry is passing through a difficult time due to low demand, excess capacity of steel production, falling steel prices, high costs of input costs etc. There is also lack of sufficient downstream facilities as well as technicians and better technology. An institute namely Biju Patnaik National Steel Institute (BPNSI) has been set up at Puri (Orissa). Its main activities will be three-fold *viz.* (i) research and development; (ii) training and skill endorsement; and (iii) consultancy services in techno-economic and managerial division.

(c) The courses offered by the Institute at this stage are (i) Development of welding technology; (ii) Steel making technology; and (iii) Courses in computer.

US discrimination towards Indian steel exports

306. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US Govt, is showing discrimination to the Indian Steel exports;

(b) if so, the reasons for such discriminations;

(c) whether the Indian Steel industry is thinking of going to the WTO against the discrimination; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY Of STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The US Department of Commerce initiated ami dumping and anti subsidy proceedings against import of a number of steel related products from Indian *viz.* CTL Carbon Steel Plates, HR steel flat products and CR steel products. It has imposed anti dumping duty of 72.49% and countervailing duty of 12.8% on CTL Carbon Plates and anti-dumping duty between 29.35% and 43.07% and countervailing duty between 8.32% and 31.94% on HR Steel Flat products. Further additional safeguard duties en imports on 16 categories of steel items from India have also been recommended by US-ITC under Section 201 investigations.